

## THE IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION OF TRADITIONAL EXPERIENCE OF KOLONJA REGION IN THE PREVENTION AND THE TREATMENT OF DISEASES

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### ABSTRACT

The variable plants of Kolonja region, are used by the locals for centuries to prevent and treat various diseases. Generally the traditional medical experience of this region, is inherited verbally until today. The investigation of this experience, has been the object of our paper. We have identified 183 traditional prescriptions, which are used in 76 types of diseases. An important place in this group, occupy the receipts used for the treatment of wounds (19) and burns (28) of the skin. Likewise, the traditional drugs are also used for the treatment of cardiovascular diseases (9), gastrointestinal diseases (26), lung diseases (12), dermatologic diseases (8) and rheumatic diseases (13). The ethno pharmaceutical data have been interesting too , not only concerning the ingredients, but also for the variety of pharmaceutical forms. It resulted that in the formulation of these traditional receipts, an important role play the medicinal plants. They represent 59.2% of the ingredients, with 80 species, which were prescribed 219 times in the receipts of the formulations that are found. Furthermore, in these traditional receipts were included 20 herbal products (14.8%), prescribed 165 times, 4 animals (3%) prescribed 8 times, 21 animal products (15.5%) prescribed 64 times and 10 natural products (inorganic) 7.4% prescribed in 22 traditional receipts.

**KEYWORDS:** Traditional Medicine, Ethnomedicine, Traditional Medicaments, Medical Products

### INTRODUCTION

#### Albanian Traditional Medicine

Albanian traditional medicine is created and developed almost in the same way as traditional medicine of other nations. Therefore it results that the same thing has happened with its development. This was proved also by the anthropological studies, carried out in field of ethnomedicine, by different researchers in our country [5, 6, 10, 12]. But for our bad luck, albanians have been for 2000 years under the rule of empires, first from the Roman empire and later from Byzantine and Turkish empire, and this generally have adversely affected in the local traditional medicine as it happened in all colonized countries. In the same time, numerous invasives have adopted or ignored our ancient culture and also along with it the cultural heritage in the field of medicine [12].

#### The Possibilities of a Rich Ethnomedicine Heritage in Kolonja

The region of Kolonja extends from 550 up to 2550 meters above the sea level. It has an mountainous relieve, consisting of hills, ridges, valleys and hollows; where the karstic plateaus, formed during centuries, play the most important role. In this region dominates a continental climate, which is healthy in all seasons of the year: cold in winter-when the temperature goes up to -15 or -20 ° C, and in summer when temperatures range from 18 to 35 ° C. This region is characterized from abundant water resources, which are the origin of two rivers in Albania- Seman (Osumi) and Vjose (Langarica). Kolonja, is not only stockbreeding but also a farming area too, where are also developed fruit growing

(apples, nuts, cherries) and viticulture. The industry of Kolonja is developed only for wood processing, which is important for making less pollution. Kolonja is known for a spontaneous diversity of plants, especially for ether-oil and tanifere plants, which constitute an important source of employment and income for local residents. This natural wealth has been an important base for medical products, which is used with intelligence from the local residents to prevent and treat different diseases during centuries. Consequently, we have found there also a precious heritage of traditional medical experience for their use, which will be presented in this paper.

### **The Object of Study**

Before the 80-s in Albania the studies done for the cultural heritage in the medical field, have been the subject of study by the Institute of Folk Medicine, which has done a commendable job for the identification and study of traditional receipts and traditional practices [9]. As part of this work the study that we are presenting, deals with the identification and evaluation of traditional medicine of Kolonja region. Our object has been highlighting for several years the ethnomedicine culture of this area, as well as its scientific evaluation.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Our study is focused on two ethnomedicine aspects, which are related with identification and categorization (ethno taxonomy) of the natural products, from which are formulated the traditional medicaments, as well as their preparation mode (ethno pharmaceutical). For this, we had to organize occasionally region expeditions, which has been generally preserved by medical experience only by oral tradition.

### **Identification and Classification of Natural Products from Which are Prepared the Traditional Medicaments**

Based on the collectioned data, the traditional experience of Kolonja region includes about 183 traditional receipts, with which are treated 76 diseases. We have classified these diseases by pharmacological families as dermatology, gastroenterology, cardiology, pneumology etc. The receipts used for the treatment of wounds (19) and burns (28) of the skin, play an important role. Likewise, the role of traditional receipts used for the treatment of cardiovascular disease (9), gastrointestinal disease (26), lung disease (12), dermatologic disease (8) and rheumatic disease is very important too (13). [Table 1].

**Table 1: The Most Important Diseases and Receipts Used for their Treatment**

Nr.	Diseases	The Traditional Receipts Used
1	Cardiovascular	9
2	Gastrointestinal	26
3	Pulmonary	12
4	Rheumatic	13
5	Treatment of wounds	19
6	Treatment of burns	28

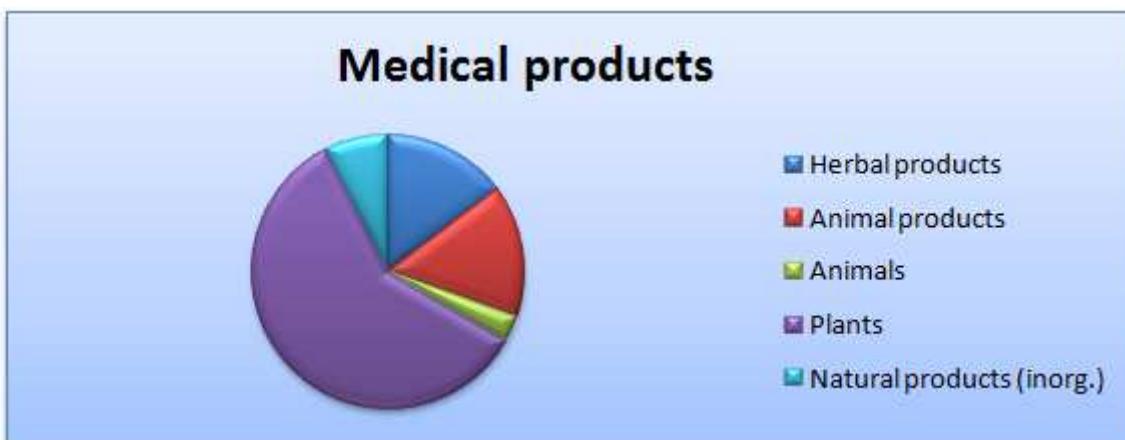
The ethno pharmaceutical datas have also been interesant not only in terms of ingredients, but also for the variety of pharmaceutical forms. Therapies used by traditional healers, include therapies with medicaments prepared from medicinal products consisting on plants, animals, and minerals.(Tab. No. 1). It resulted that in the formulation of these traditional receipts an important role play the medicinal plants, with 80 species, which were prescribed 219 times, on the receipts formulations found. Furthermore, in these traditional receipts were included 20 herbal products: prescribed 165

times, 4 animals: prescribed 8 times, 21 animal products: prescribed 64 times, as well as 10 natural products (inorganic): prescribed in 22 traditional receipts. (Table 2)

**Table 2**

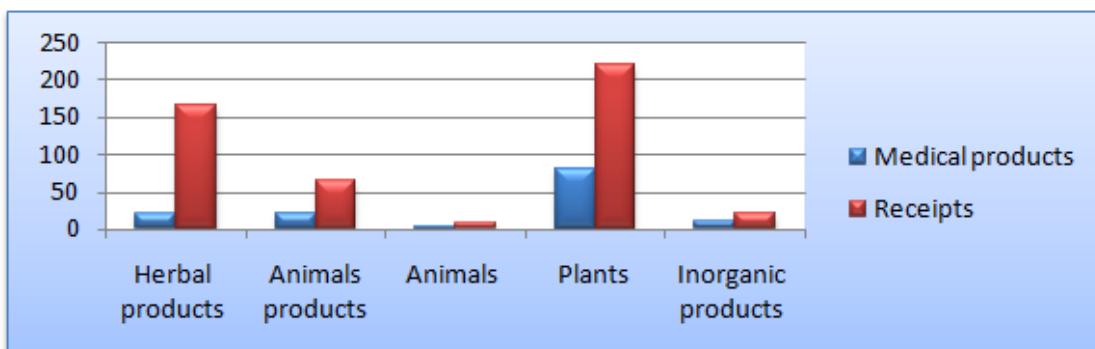
Medical Products (Types)	Medical Products (Quantity)	The Traditional Receipts Used
Herbal Products	20	165
Animal products	21	64
Animals	4	8
Plants	80	219
Natural products (inorganic)	10	22

The total number of medical products which participated in the formulation of traditional medicaments was 135 species. From these, an important role play herbal medicaments, (which derived from plants or parts of them), in the form of liquids extracts, as well as in form of traditional solid or semisolide forms, such as ointments and pills. They represented 59.2% of the components which participated in the formulation of traditional receipts. Moreover, 14.8% of these receipts were with herbal products, 3% with animals and 15.5% were with animal products. Whereas the percentage of natural products (inorganic) was only 7.4 %. (Figure 1)



**Figure 1: Schematic Representation of Medical Products, Used in Traditional Formulations**

Despite herbal and animal products were in the same percentage (Figure 1), the frequency of the usage of herbal products was higher (they were included in 165 traditional formulations) than the frequency of the usage of animal products (they were included in 64 traditional receipts) (Table 2).



**Figure 2: Medical Products that are Used in Traditional Preparations and the Frequency of their Use in Traditional Formulations (Traditional Medicaments)**

In traditional receipts of the region of Kolonja, was noticed that the plants were used more in these formulations: Where St. Johns Worth (*Hypericum perforatum L.*) in 6 receipts, sage (*Salvia sclara L.*) in 8 receipts, bee herb (*Melissa officinalis L.*) in 5 receipts, garlic (*Allium sativum L.*) in 15 receipts, olive oil (*Oleum olivarum*) in 43 receipts, petroleum (*Petroleum*) in 8 receipts etc.

## CONCLUSIONS

- The region of Kolonja, offers us a very rich experience of traditional medicine with 183 traditional receipts, which must be also studied in ethnopharmacologic terms
- This region offers diverse natural health products with a very good quality.
- Medicinal Plants occupy an important place in traditional receipts formulation, in which participated 80 plant species, which are prescribed 219 times in the receipts that we have identified
- The plants which have been used more were : St.Johns Worth (*Hypericum perforatum*), prescribed in 6 receipts, sage (*Salvia sclara L.*) in 8 receipts and garlic (*Allium sativum L.*) in 15 traditional receipts.
- Olive oil was one of the herbal products which occupied a very important place. It was prescribed as an excipient in 43 formulations

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